

Message Text

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E.O. 11652 N/A
SUBJECT: BELGIAN MEDIA REACTION

ADMINISTRATION HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES EVOKED CRITICAL COMMENT FROM DE STANDAARD'S MIA DOORNAERT JULY 28. SHE CONTRASTED THE U.S. DECISION TO SUSPEND ALL VISITS OF HIGH U.S. OFFICIALS TO THE SOVIET UNION TO PROTEST RECENT TRIALS IN THAT COUNTRY WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S LAUDATORY COMMENT ON THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA ON THE OCCASION OF THE "RE-ELECTION" OF PARK CHUNG HEE, DESPITE THE FACT THAT RECENTLY A SOUTH KOREAN PUBLISHER AND AN AUTHOR WERE SENTENCED TO HARD LABOR FOR PUBLISHING A BOOK ON CHINA. UNDER THE HEADING "HYPOCRITICAL," DOORNAERT WRITES: "A STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN ATTEMPTED TO EXTENUATE THE CASE BY SAYING THAT THE SENTENCES COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE AND THAT THE TWO IN FACT HADHAD A FAIR TRIAL 'UNDER THE LAWS OF THEIR COUNTRY'. THAT IS AN ARGUMENT WHICH CAME ACROSS AS NOT VERY CREDIBLE, FOR ON THE BASIS OF THAT REASONING THERE IS ALSO NO REASON WHATSOEVER TO PROTEST AGAINST THE TRIALS OF SHCHARANSKY AND OTHER

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RUSSIANS, UNLESS THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S OBJECTIVE IS NOT TO DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS BUT TO CAUSE AS MUCH TROUBLE AS POSSIBLE TO CERTAIN COUNTRIES. AND IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S AND HIS ADMINISTRATION'S CONCERN ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS IS, TO SAY THE LEAST, SELECTIVE. ON HIS FIRST WORLD TRIP CARTER SPOKE ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS IN POLAND, WHERE THERE ARE NO POLITICAL PRISONERS, BUT HE KEPT

COMPLETELY SILENT ABOUT IRAN, WHERE A TOUGH REPRESSION IS
TAKING PLACE. HE SAID ON THE CONTRARY THAT HE TOTALLY
AGREED WITH HIS FRIEND THE SHAH. IF THE U.S. ADMINISTRA-
TION WERE TO MAKE AS MUCH NOISE ABOUT THE MANY PEOPLE,
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ACTIVE POLITICALLY OR IN THE UNIONS, THE PRIESTS OR
'LEFTISTS' OF ALL KINDS IN LATIN AMERICA WHO DISAPPEAR,
ARE KEPT IN PRISON WITHOUT TRIAL OR ARE SIMPLY ASSASSINATED
WITH SILENT OFFICIAL APPROVAL AS IT DOES ABOUT THE RECENT
DISSIDENTS TRIALS IN THE SOVIET UNION, ITS CONCERN FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS WOULD SEEM TO BE MUCH LESS SELECTIVE. IN THE
SOVIET UNION ITSELF THE AMERICAN LEADERS MOREOVER ARE MORE
CONCERNED ABOUT A SMALL MINORITY OF PEOPLE WHO WANT TO
EMIGRATE AND GET AN ENORMOUS PUBLICITY THROUGH THE PRESS,
THAN ABOUT THE MILLIONS WHO WANT TO LIVE AND WORK IN THEIR
OWN COUNTRY AND WHO ARE TRYING TO CHANGE THE ATMOSPHERE
THERE SO THAT A REPETITION OF THE RECENT TRIALS WOULD
BECOME UNNECESSARY AND IMPOSSIBLE. THE CASE OF THE TWO
SOUTH KOREAN PUBLISHERS HAS MADE STILL LARGER THE QUESTION
MARKS AROUND CARTER'S CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. A MEMBER OF
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SAID: 'WE APPLY A DOUBLE
STANDARD IF WE STRESS OUR BELIEF IN HUMAN RIGHTS ONLY IN
CERTAIN COUNTRIES WHILE OTHERS ARE LEFT FREE TO VIOLATE
THEM. THIS MAKES US LOOK HYPOCRITICAL!.' ITEM

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